active in the interest of the Society for forty-two years, and his contributions and efforts toward its progress form a lasting record.

INTERESTED IN SQUARE DANCES?

A Square Dance Festival

On sullen days — we all have them — we like to think of our members who are taking part in activities that promote pleasure and at the same time historical values that accent some phase of the past and present life of the state.

Mr. Herbert E. Warren, Fairlee, Vt., is chairman of the Vermont Labor Day Week End at the Lake Fairlee Club, Ely, Vt., and the Lake Morey Casino, at Fairlee. There will be a solid three-day program of dance experience under a nationally known director of square dancing. Anyone anxious to improve his form as a dancer, caller, or group leader is welcome.

OUR STORY OF THE MONTH

A Fishing Tale

The ancestor of this yarn probably dates back to the Ark, but the Vermont version appears in an old diary of 1855. One morning a little after dawn on a morning of thick fog, a local doctor on his way after an early call in Woodbury, Vt., gave an oldtimer with a fine string of bass a "lift" in his buggy. The string interested the M. D., and he asked the immortal question: "What'd you catch them with? How'd you see where to fish in this fog, anyway?"

The oldtimer hemmed a bit. "Caught 'em with worms, best bait there is, but you got to git up early. Couldn't see the water with the fog; so I jest cast out. Ye know, Doc, that fog was so thick, them bass was swimmin' around in it catchin' mosquitoes! I tossed out a worm in that fog an' it stayed there. Easiest fishin' I ever had. Pretty thick fog, that was."

VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, MONTPELIER, VERMONT.
Leon S. Gay, President; Dr. Arthur W. Peach, Director and Editor,
Mrs. Louise E. Koier, Associate Editor.

VHS *News and Notes*

VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Montpelier, Vermont

Sec. 34.66
P. L. & R.

NEWS AND NOTES

VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY · MONTPELIER, VERMONT

Volume 3 September 1951 Number 1

Statue of Lafayette—University of Vermont Campus
Courtesy of the University of Vermont Publicity Bureau

THE GENERAL'S RETURN AND FAREWELL

Lafayette Visits Vermont in 1825

Here in Vermont it can be said with truth that "old soldiers never die." They live on in the minds and hearts of the people. Today, while the excitement of a great general's homecoming still surges through the national consciousness, our thoughts turn to the homecoming of another beloved hero—General Lafayette—and his memorable farewell visit to Ver-

mont.

There were no tape recording machines in 1825 to preserve his speeches, no cameras to catch the slight, erect figure as it moved imperturbably through the discomforts and hazards of an arduous journey. But we still have the words of contemporary writers and the mementoes treasured long after the rumble of his coach had died away in the distance.

For Lafayette the journey through Vermont was the climax of a longed-for project. At sixty-eight, after a lifetime devoted to the cause of liberty, he was revisiting the Republic he had championed in his youth. On his arrival in Montpelier, he said, "I have now accomplished one of the greatest objects of my life. I have visited the twenty-four states of the Union; I have been the happy witness of the immense, rapid and ever-increasing results of independence, republican institutions and self-government, and you, sir, and all of you, I congratulate on the public and domestic happiness which is enjoyed by the citizens of Vermont." Since he had already been naturalized by acts of legislature in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and several other states, this visit was quite literally a home-coming. When he was asked on his arrival in New York, whether he should be addressed as Marquis or General, Lafayette said, "I am an American general." And on being complimented at Harvard on his excellent English, he replied, "I am an American citizen who has been absent for a time."

After visiting all the Southern and Middle states and traveling 5,000 miles by coach, carriage, steamboat and wagon, he went to Boston to assist at the laying of the cornerstone of Bunker Hill Monument, then made a hurried trip to Maine and passed through New Hampshire on his way to Vermont. He crossed the Connecticut River at 7 A. M. on the morning of June 28. His 102-mile trip through the state began at Windsor and ended at Burlington, following the old stage route running from Boston to Montreal.

All along his way thousands of citizens had gathered to greet him, and there were frequent touching reunions with revolutionary veterans whom he remembered and called by name. It was a varied and colorful procession. From Woodstock to Barnard the General's coach was escorted by the men of Barnard wearing high caps with strips of bearskin over the tops from front to back. The Tunbridge Artillery paraded in resplendent new scarlet and blue uniforms trimmed with braid and brass buttons, with stiff white plumes waving from their tall blue caps. As he passed through Berlin a band of little girls ran out to strew flowers in front of the coach.

Lafayette's secretary wrote: "Vermont is very mountainous, which rendered the road more dificult. We traveled with extreme rapidity, advancing almost all the time more than 9 miles an hour—relays of horses having been well distributed by the whole state." Because of the road itself, the pauses to change horses (they were given a fresh team every ten miles and sixty-four horses were used in the course of the journey), and most of all because of the frequent stops to meet the committees of reception, the General's progress was considerably delayed. Expected to reach Montpelier at 5 P. M., he did not arrive until close to nine, and many of the country people who had traveled in on foot, on horseback, by wagon or buggy, were forced to plod dejectedly homeward to their waiting chores.

Although in the village of Montpelier the news of Lafayette's approach came only twenty minutes before his arrival, by the time his coach entered the town, every house in the community had its candles lighted. The reporter for the *Montpelier Watchman* of July 5 writes: "The illumination of Mr. Shepard's house, fronting on the road on which he entered the village was particularly brilliant and the light of it, breaking quite unexpectedly upon the party, as they came to the summit of the hill, produced a grateful and most exhilerating effect."

The Washington Artillery and Light Infantry of Montpelier and the Berlin Infantry received the General at his entrance into the town and escorted him from Mr. Shepard's Inn to the Academy, back to State Street and down State Street to the State House. To the crowds along the way the handsome coach drawn by six beautiful white horses must have been a splendid sight. At the State House Lafayette and his suite were led from their carriages to the second-story balcony, where he watched the military parade on the lighted common. An unusual feature of this parade was the company of fourteen-year-old boys in uniform who acted later as the General's bodyguard and who drilled with such precision that the General sent them his personal congratulations.

Marquis de Lafayette
As he Looked in 1825

After replying to the speech of welcome by Judge Elijah Paine and meeting the ladies and revolutionary soldiers in Representatives Hall, he reviewed the military and was then escorted to Mr. Mann's Hotel for the banquet that had been prepared for the occasion. "The entertainment at Mr. Mann's," writes the *Watchman's* reporter, "was splendid . . . the evergreens at the windows . . . the festoons of natural roses with which the room was hung . . . and the elegance and abundance of the tables . . . left the guests nothing to do but to be cheerful and delighted." Significant of the importance attached to that evening is the fact that a plate Lafayette used at the banquet, the great blue and white platter from which he was served and a fife played in the band, may still be seen in our Museum collection.

After the last toast had been drunk (there were sixteen in all), the General spent what was left of the night at the Cadwell house, then the finest home in the village. Here too the community had outdone itself to honor their guest, one lady loaning her finest china, another a handsome carved bed, and still another her best sofa.

In the morning after a speech of welcome by Mrs. Erastus Watrous in the meetinghouse and another interview with the revolutionary soldiers, the *Watchman* concludes: "The General left them in tears, and passing up the street to Onion river bridge and back to the corner and thence down State Street, left the place amid a waving of handkerchiefs by the ladies and repeated and affectionate adieus by the men." It was characteristic of this man, who never forgot a friend or deserted a principle, that his final act before leaving America was to pay off the obligations of his 77-year-old friend and comrade-in-arms, General William Barton, and release him from the debtors' prison where he had spent 14 years.

When the last uniform had been packed away and the last piece of borrowed finery restored to its owner, the village of Montpelier slowly and reluctantly returned to its placid daily round. But the memory of the music, the eloquent speeches, the parades and above all, the warmth of a generous and sturdy spirit, still hung like an aura over its quiet streets. Lafayette himself never forgot those last days of his wonderful tour of the Union and in 1826 when he wrote Governor Van Ness to introduce a French compatriot, he remarked wistfully, "I wish I could partake in his enviable sight of the Green Mountains."

MERRILY THE SEARCH GOES ON

About Vermont Place Names

Our files in preparation for the publishing of our "Vermont Place Names" volume are filling up. Preliminary articles will appear in the *Quarterly;* and we hope our members will continue to lend a willing hand.

Many a Vermont place name not only

has a long background of historical significance, but also, very often, it gives a peek into long vanished lives and days. Some of the names are intriguing puzzles. For instance, "Lemon Fair," the name of a creek near Vergennes, is a puzzler. We have already printed two of the traditional explanations. Mrs. H. S. Colton (VHS) of Springfield, Mass., adds a decidedly impressive explanation.

Miss Dorothy Walter (VHS) of Providence while doing some editing found the phrase, "Lebanon-Crank," and thought it might mean "Conn." Mrs. Colton was able to show that the reference was to Lebanon, Conn., to a part known as the "Crank"; and it seems that a "crank" in England is a long narrow strip of land.

Mrs. Colton applies the analogy to "Lemon Fair." In an old French map of the Fort Ticonderoga section, she found a path labeled "Dieskan's Path." She noted in the Vermont 1800 Census an Ezekial Lemon; and also in a book giving the names of Revolutionary soldiers from Vermont she discovered a William Lemmon enlisted in a company from Rutland in 1778. (By the way, are there any Lemons left in Vermont? Ed.)

As Mrs. Colton says, "These facts place certain members of the Lemon family in early western Vermont." She concludes that "Lemon Fair" really at one time meant "Lemon Fare"—that is, "the path, trail or way, by or on the river" used by a Lemon or Lemons and so named after an immemorial custom.

The careful research and ingenious reasoning by Mrs. Colton appeals to us, and we congratulate her even if we must hold in abeyance a final acceptance of her verdict.

Now if she and others would help us with the annoying word "gulf," applied in Vermont to a narrow valley such as the "Brookfield Gulf"! The derivation is possibly simple, but we are hopelessly at a dead end—and inquiries come in constantly for light on the word.

ROBINSON — A VERMONT IMMORTAL

Young Vermonters Win Parker Prizes

To many Vermonters and other loyal friends of the state the name Rowland E. Robinson is still somewhat unfamiliar. To hundreds of others, however, the name of the good Quaker story-teller of Ferrisburg is a loved name; and among the books on a favorite bookshelf are *Uncle Lisha's Shop, Danvis Folks,* and *Sam Lovel's Camp.* We are widening the scope of the Society's interests rapidly, and one of our first ventures into Vermont's literary history is going to be a thorough-going study of Robinson with plenty of illustrations. This will appear in the *Quarterly.*

There was a time when it seemed that Robinson was to be forgotten. Writing in the period of the great New England group in Massachusetts, the Vermonter back in his hills had no one to acclaim his achievements. He had his faithful followers, however, and in recent years the Rowland E. Robinson Association was formed. Active in it were a number of our members. It is now a strong and progressing organization. Our Director was elected president of it for this year, and a Robinson devotee since his boyhood, he hopes to be of service in bringing Robinson closer to Vermonters and other readers.

This year, the Rowland E. Robinson Essay Contest was combined with the Society's Edmunds contest, and students in the high schools of the state were invited to discuss Robinson. The response was very satisfactory, and the following prizes were awarded: Mary K. Kearney, Cathedral H. S., Burlington—$15; James Plummer, Vermont Academy, Saxton's River (Mr. Plummer's home is in Mexico)—$10; Nancy M. Maurer, Lyndon Institute, Lyndon Center—$5. Honorable mention went to Gary Bennett, Shelburne H. S.; Anita Shelton, Stowe H. S.; Karen A. Oscarson, Proctor H. S.; Edward A. Newton, Edmunds H. S., Burlington.

Twenty-five dollars of the prize funds were donated by Miss Ruth H. Parker of Springfield, Illinois, for many years interested in forwarding a wider knowledge of the Vermont story-teller. The Society added $5 for the third prize. The judges were Prof. D. L. Robinson, Mrs. E. J. Wiley and Mr. M. D. Marshall of Middlebury.

Two Plaintive Ghosts *by* Burges Johnson

Our pioneer and early cemeteries in the quiet villages of our hills and valleys and in remote places far from passing wheel or step hold stories far-reaching through the years in terms of romance, tragedy, achievement, courage, and sacrifice that never will be told. Rarely, now and then, someone with the interest and the skill can seek out and tell the long-forgotten story. Here Professor Johnson tells such a story, and makes it in our ever-vanishing days a lasting record—the story behind two tombstones in the hamlet of Greenbush, Vermont. A. W. P.

On the highway between Springfield and Woodstock in the village of Greenbush there is a miniature cemetery on a slight elevation close to the eastern edge of the road. It was well cared for when I first saw it years ago, and it had more than its fair share of graves of men who had fought in our nation's war for independence.

But over two of its graves today I imagine plaintive ghosts hovering, ill at ease because of the indifference or forgetfulness of their many descendants. Not that they should be actually unhappy spirits, for they had both lived useful and contented lives together for many years, surrounded by devoted children. The wife died first, as the result of an accident; she was thrown from her buggy as she drove home in the dark, after spending a long evening with a sick neighbor. The husband lived on for twenty-three years, many of them spent in the home of a daughter and son-in-law. The two stones in the little cemetery give only the dates of death.

Rev. Jeremiah Johnson
Died Nov. 2, 1847, age 84
Thomazin, wife of Rev. Jeremiah Johnson
Died Dec. 10, 1824, age 63

The house in which they lived is still standing within a few hundred feet of the point where Cavendish, Windsor, Reading and Weathersfield townships come together. Nearby, across the highway, is the spot where Captive Johnson was born, while savages impatiently awaited the birth, on their long trek to Canada with their prisoners. There is no good reason to believe that the Reverend Jeremiah was in any way related to that Captive child, though one of his daughters married a descendant.

Jeremiah Johnson, according to family legend, was born in Braintree (later Quincy), Massachusetts, in 1763. No record has been found of his birth, and there is no record of any Johnson family in Braintree at that time. Presumably during his early youth he moved with his parents to Charlestown, New Hampshire; for at the age of secventeen he enlisted

there in Colonel Cilley's 1st Regiment, New Hampshire Line, and served until the close of the war. He was too young to have enlisted sooner, and too late for any of the great battles of that war. But it is a matter of record that he "performed honorable service, and was discharged in June, 1783, after he had been ordered with dispatches across the state to a military board sitting at Keene."

On April 15, 1788, in Charlestown, he married Thomazin Blanchard, and after the birth of two children the couple moved to Reading, Vermont. A grandson has recorded the belief that both the Johnsons and the Blanchards had moved from Quincy, and that the young people had become acquainted there. However, there is as yet no record of parents or grandparents; Jeremiah literally "came out of the everywhere into the here," though two brothers and two sisters were living in Charlestown in 1788.

Family legend says that he was 5 ft., 10 in. tall, and a famous wrestler, defeating challengers from many sections of Vermont. Evidently he was also a good farmer, for the records show that later in life he added to his holdings in Weathersfield and Reading from time to time. Undoubtedly he was a church-goer, for Reading town records show that in middle age he was "ordained a deacon and licensed to preach."

The fact that he named one of his sons after Lorenzo Dow suggests that at middle age he had come under the influence of that fantastic evangelist who was then storming up and down Vermont converting sinners. It would be interesting to know how many Lorenzo Dows there were, in that next generation, scattered through northern New England.

So Jeremiah apparently divided his time between farming, preaching, and—let us hope—wrestling, and the bringing up of nine children. These nine begat thirty-eight grandchildren, and they in their turn were equally prolific, producing one hundred and fifty-three great-grandchildren, of whom the writer of these notes, himself a grandfather, is one. At a conservative guess there are five hundred descendants living at this moment, including babies in the 4th generation. Yet few remained in Vermont, for there seemed to be an adventurous streak in them from the start, which sent them into the West. Greenbush, Ohio, owes its name to a group of them, and Iowa and Michigan on the far frontier absorbed others.

On Jan. 19, 1813, this veteran of the war for independence left his family and his farm lands, his wrestling with the devil and with his fellow man, and enlisted for the War of 1812, in Capt. Marston's Company, 21st Regiment, U. S. Infantry. He was then fifty years old. He saw active service, and, on Oct. 5, 1814, he was honorably discharged on the surgeon's certificate of disability, at Fort Erie, in Canada. Records say that "because of his age and peculiar fitness for the task he was placed in charge of the wounded after the battle of Ft. Erie." Lossing, in his *Field-book of the War of 1812* refers to him as being "in charge of the hospital at Buffalo." But no record has been found in the archives of the Buffalo Historical Society to confirm this. Reference is made, however, to an intermediate station in that city between the field hospital on the battleground and the general hospital in Williamsville.

This has been all too scant a record of one of Vermont's pioneers and a veteran of our nation's two earliest wars. But I am enabled to brighten it up by quoting at greater length from Lossing's gossipy *Fieldbook* where he refers to the siege of Fort Erie:

There are two survivors of that army yet living with whom I have had correspondence, who are worthy of notice because of their remarkable escape from death; having been wounded so desperately that no hope could ever be entertained of their recovery, yet for over fifty years they have lived as useful members of society.

I refer to Robert White, of Morrison, Whiteside County, Illinois, as one of them. He had both arms shot off above the elbows on the evening of Aug. 15 . . . White was then about twenty years of age. His wounds were dressed by Dr. Hunt, and in a week afterward he was taken to Buffalo and placed in the care of Jeremiah Johnson, then in charge of the hospital at that place. That kind-hearted gentleman nursed him tenderly and became his benefactor; and was chiefly instrumental in procuring for the young soldier a life pension of $480 a year.

Jeremiah did much more than secure the pension for White. He took him home to Greenbush, Vermont, and there in that little house still standing on the Springfield-Woodstock highroad his daughter Mary, recently widowed by the same war, nursed the armless young veteran and eventually married him. What a wooing that must have been ! They had thirteen children, and their descendants today are scattered far and wide, and many of them have won distinction. Jeremiah, in his declining years, moved into the homestead of his son-in-law.

Lossing says further:

Mr. White contrived an apparatus composed of a pen fixed in a triangular piece of wood, by which, holding it between his teeth, he was soon enabled to write, not only with facility but with remarkable clearness. His penmanship failed in elegance only when he lost his teeth.

Those among Jeremiah's far-scattered progeny who concern themselves about ancestry may regret that their Johnson line apparently begins with Jeremiah. Yet perhaps it is just as well that any ancestral line should begin with a man who farmed well and preached well and wrestled well, and served well in two wars, and sired a throng of decent citizens. For many strange ingredients went into that early New England melting pot, and we might wisely let well enough alone. But at least we might decorate his grave.

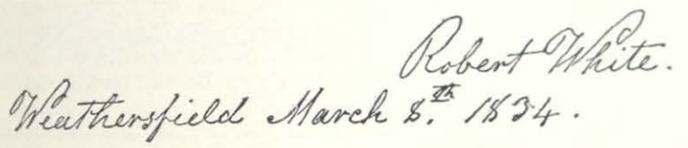
As to my other plaintive ghost, she too mourns a lost ancestry; for she was the only child of the only child of one James Gibson, merchant, of Boston. He made his entrance, spoke his lines—and dramatic lines they were!—then quickly made his tragic exit; and the playbill offers us no early notes about him.

In 1730, Gibson was a captain in a British regiment stationed in the Barbadoes. Nothing is known of his past except that among his few surviving effects is a parchment coat-of-arms, evidently the work of the College of Heraldry. Its colors are still brilliant; there is a ducal crest, and on the board backing is written, "The ancient and honourable Family of Gibson—300 years." Then follows a full description of the arms in heraldic terms. Commissions in the British army were often purchased in those days for younger sons; but whose younger son James might be neither record nor rumor reveals.

For a time he must have been attached to his regiment in the Barbadoes, for there he met a well-to-do widow, Mary Duesbury Hayden, married her, resigned his commission, and settled down to the management of her estates. Later he moved to Boston, built what is referred to in the Probate Records as "the mansion on Beacon Hill" and established a shipping trade with the West Indies.

I am tempted to divert my brief narrative here to include an account of Gibson's visit to Canso for his friend Governor Shirley, to spy out the strength of the French, and also some of the fantastic aspects of the Louisburg Expedition. But space does not permit, even though such records as we have of Gibson's part in it throw new light on a great colonial achievement.

(Continued in the October Issue)



A Reproduction of Robert White's Signature, Written with a Pen Held in his Teeth

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

With this issue, the first in Volume 3, each issue of NEWS AND NOTES *will be copyrighted. Brief quotations may be used freely. Permission for more extensive use should be secured.*

AN INTRODUCTION

The initials, "L. K." which you found attached to the excellent report on the Basin Harbor Conference in the August NEWS AND NOTES *represent Mrs. Louise E. Koier, Assistant to the Director. Aside from being a capable secretary, she is also associate editor of the* QUARTERLY *and* NEWS AND NOTES. *Mrs. Koier specialized in History and English at Tufts College, and her editorial experience includes work on the* BIOLOGICAL BULLETIN *of the Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, Mass., also an assistant editorship in the college textbook department of Henry Holt and Co.*

OUR STORY OF THE MONTH

A Helpful Suggestion

One of our town clerks who has good stories to tell of Vermont is responsible for this one. He can give names and dates, but we eliminate them.

In the elder days when revivalists bore down heavily on the "hell-fire and brimstone" theory, a certain revivalist discussing the above theme, announced with vigor in his address: "My grandmother was a bad woman and she is in hell."

As he ranted on, one, two, and then three men rose and left the hall. As each departed, he yelled to his audience and to each: "There goes a man straight to hell!" The first two made no answer. The third, going out sedately and calmly, turned toward the speaker on the platform and said mildly: "Have you a message for your grandmother?"

VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, MONTPELIER, VERMONT.
Leon S. Gay, President; Dr. Arthur W. Peach, Director and Editor,
Mrs. Louise E. Koier, Associate Editor.
Copyright 1951 by The Vermont Historical Society

974.30
V59n

VHS *News and Notes*

State Library and Supreme Court Building
Home of the
VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Montpelier, Vermont

Sec. 34.66
P. L. & R.

974.30
V59n

Volume 3 October 1951 Number 2

THE STORY OF INDEPENDENCE STAND

A Bit of Furniture and Much History

If by some mysterious alchemy more than one article of furniture in our older homes or in our museums could speak, many an entrancing tale could be told. As it is, the silence about them grows deeper with the years. We plan to tell in brief sketches some of the stories in so far as we can rescue them. Here is a sketch of a small table, standing silently in the State Museum.

The authors of this brief history are Allyn R. Scott and Charles H. Scott, 8 Brady Road, Madison Barracks, Sackets Harbor, N. Y. *A. W. P.*

October is a rare month for the lovers of liberty and patriotism in Vermont. Nowadays, we hear the call of freedom's war against aggression and tyranny. It was so in 1774 and 1776, for it was on October 3, 1774, following a call of the New York City Committee of Correspondence, Isaac Low, Chairman, dated May 21, 1774, to ascertain the sentiments of the inhabitants of Cumberland County regarding the unjust acts of the British Parliament toward the Colonies, that a Chester, Vt., town meeting issued a call "to know the minds of the people regarding these acts and make report to New York."

In pursuance of this call on October 10th, 1774, the inhabitants of Chester met at the home of Lieut. Jonathan Tarbell, called Chester's "Independence Hall," chose Thomas Chandler, Esq., moderator, and voted Thomas Chandler, Jr., Timothy Olcott, Moses Gile, John Smith and John Grout a committee to join the county committee to make report to the Committee of Correspondence in New York; and the meeting gave expression to its sentiments by passing, without dissent, resolutions in opposition to the unjust acts of the Parliament in London.

These resolutions, in four parts, are a Declaration of Rights of the freeborn inhabitants of the Colonies to their property and persons to the effect that Acts of the British Parliament tending to take away or abridge these rights ought not to be obeyed and that the people of Chester would join with their fellow Americans in opposing in all lawful ways every encroachment of their natural rights.

These Resolutions or Declaration of Rights uttered at Chester, Vermont, October 10, 1774, were six months in advance of the famous Declaration of Rights of Mecklenburg, N. C., May 31, 1775, and two years in advance of the Declaration of Independence at Philadelphia July 4, 1776.

The U. S. Constitution and its Bill of